



RESIDENTIAL EGRESS WINDOWS: EMERGENCY ESCAPE & RESCUE REQUIREMENTS

- A. All basements in new construction including room additions and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue window or an exterior door opening (i.e. walkout basement).
- B. Existing basements with an egress window or walkout door shall not be required to add an additional egress window in each new sleeping room if: a) the stairway to a grade level floor and the second means of egress (the egress window) are separated by a reasonable distance and b) additional smoke detectors are installed in each area and sleeping room(s) in the basement.
- C. Exception to egress window requirement: Existing basements, constructed or with approved permits before May 1, 2002, which do not have sleeping rooms, but which have other finished areas, shall be provided additional smoke detectors in each area or room. Plus, a smoke detector shall be located on the first floor in an area that covers the path from the top of the stairway to an exterior door.
- D. Dimensions: emergency escape and rescue windows shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet. The minimum height dimension shall be 24 inches. The minimum width dimension shall be 20 inches. The maximum sill height shall not be more than 44 inches above the finished floor.
- E. Sill heights in basements may be measured from an elevated landing, window seat, or similar installation. The structure shall not be less than 36 inches wide, and shall extend at least 20 inches out from the exterior wall, and shall be a maximum 24 inches high. It shall be permanently affixed to the floor and the wall under the window it serves.
- F. Window wells for emergency escape windows shall allow the window to be fully opened. The window well shall provide a minimum net clear area of 9 square feet with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches (3'x3'). Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches shall be equipped with a ladder or steps.

Check the category that applies to this project:

- _____ An egress window will be installed in the basement of this project.
- _____ An egress window will be installed in every sleeping room (bedroom) of this project.
- _____ This project has a walkout door or an egress window in the basement. An additional egress window will not be installed in each bedroom, however this project will meet the requirements of item B, listed above.
NOTE: (Installation of an egress window in every bedroom is still recommended).
- _____ This is an existing basement, which does not have a sleeping room. A sleeping room will not be installed as part of this project, and this project will meet the requirements of item C, listed above.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read the emergency escape requirements listed on this page. I have checked the category that applies to this project, and agree to comply with all City ordinances regulating said requirements.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Project Address: _____

The City of
West Des Moines

Development Services Dept.

4200 Mills Civic Parkway
Suite 2D
P.O. Box 65320
West Des Moines, IA 50265

www.wdm.iowa.gov

Building Division
515-222-3630

Planning & Eng. Divisions
515-222-3620

FAX 515-273-0602
TDD/TTY 515-222-3334

E-mail
developmentservices@wdm.iowa.gov

Fire Marshal
515-222-3420